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Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)

1. What is the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA)?

The FAFSA is the application students complete to apply for federal and Alaska state student aid, which can be used to attend an eligible college or career school. In addition to determining eligibility for federal student aid, many private organizations and institutions rely on information from the FAFSA to determine eligibility for other sources of aid.

- The FAFSA will be available **October 1**.
- The FAFSA will collect income tax information from two years prior. See table below:

When a Student Is Attending College (School Year)	When a Student Can Submit a FAFSA	Which Year's Income Information Is Required
July 1, 2017–June 30, 2018	October 1, 2016–June 30, 2018	2015
July 1, 2018–June 30, 2019	October 1, 2017–June 30, 2019	2016

2. How does the two year prior tax information benefit students?

- Alignment – with the college application process.
- Certainty – “Prior-Prior” taxes will typically be finalized; no estimates required.
- More time – for students to explore and understand financial aid options and apply for aid before state and school deadlines.

3. Will colleges change their financial aid processing timelines due to the FAFSA being available earlier?

That is a decision that each college will make. Students should contact their schools to determine whether the schools will adjust their processing timelines once the FAFSA is available earlier. It is important for the students to confirm individual deadlines.





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4. Do students still have to complete the FAFSA every year?

Yes. Students will need to fill out the FAFSA for each school year in which they plan to be a student. Eligibility for financial aid can differ from year to year for various reasons, including a student's or family's financial situation or the number of family members in college.

5. Is the IRS Data Retrieval Tool (DRT) available with the 2018-2019 FAFSA?

Yes. The IRS Data Retrieval Tool (DRT) allows applicants (and their parents, if applicable) to access the IRS tax return information needed to complete the FAFSA, and transfer the required information directly into the FAFSA from the IRS. To do so, it is imperative that the address provided on the FAFSA is identical to the information provided on tax returns.

6. Can a student still be selected for verification if he or she is using 2016 income information on his or her 2018-2019 FAFSA?

Yes. A student can be selected for verification by either the U.S. Department of Education or by the student's school. Verification is a process by which a student is required to submit documentation that the data reported on the student's FAFSA is accurate.

7. What if students' financial situation has changed since "Prior-Prior" tax year?

Students who experience dramatic changes in their financial situation should contact their financial aid office, which may use professional judgment as appropriate to the students' situation.

